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PREFACE.

THE completion of another volume of 'The Zoologist' shows no diminution in the ranks of students of our British Fauna. The numbers of our contributors are practically an exact equivalent of those who produced the previous volume. Some we shall not hear from again, and we cannot help recurring to the loss of our old and valued contributor—John Cordeaux.

The Mammalia have not been neglected, and many original facts and observations have been published during the present year. Mr. Oldham's description of "The Mode in which Bats secure their Prey" is of permanent value. We have been enabled to give a good figure of the "Sea-Elephant" (*Macrorhinus elephantinus*), while the description of the Trek-bokke (*Gazella euchore*) refers to an animal which, owing to the destructiveness of man, will never be seen in its vast herds again.

Ornithology is the strength of the volume. It is unnecessary to detail any particulars among the many observations which have made 'The Zoologist' for 1899, as in all previous volumes, a special storehouse for facts in avian bionomics. We cannot, however, ignore Mr. Edmund Selous' "Observational Diary of the Habits of Nightjars." This is a unique publication, which seems to alone recall Prof. Mills' method in his "Psychic Development of Young Animals," published originally in the 'Transactions' of the Royal Society of Canada. The many necessary discussions which have appeared in our "Notes and Queries" may be instanced by that on the "Nesting Habits of the Moor-hen."

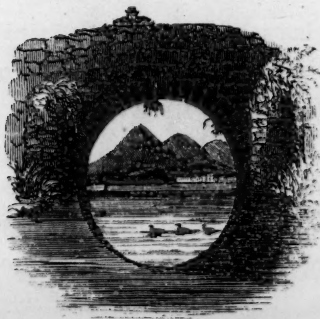
In Reptilia, Mr. G. T. Rope has given us the results of his observations on the Common Toad (*Bufo vulgaris*), and Mr. Monk has written an excellent account of the spawning of

Bombinator pachypus after two years of captivity in England. We have also published many other interesting notes on the Order.

Pisces still claim more recognition in our pages. We have, however, been able to figure a great Eagle Ray (*Dicerobatis* sp. ?), taken at Port Natal; while Mr. Patterson's notes from Great Yarmouth help to accentuate the dearth of news from other sea-ports.

In this volume more attention has been paid to the many interesting questions relative to the progress of organic evolution. Such titles as "Fecundity in each Avine Species, varying according to Accident of Locality"; "Varying Fecundity in Birds"; "The Coloration of British Birds and their Eggs"; "Mimicry," &c., tell their own tale, and prove that 'The Zoologist,' though conservative as to fact, cannot be pronounced as illiberal to theory.

We shall not write the centuries by the numerals "18" again; may the new figures bring prosperity to our Science and its votaries.



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